



## Letter to the Editor

## Stature estimation from inter-anterior superior iliac spinous distance – Some technical considerations

Dear Editor,

Estimation of stature is an important parameter in the identification of unknown human remains. There is always a need to develop methods of stature estimation that can be utilized in the absence of intact long bones and limbs which are most commonly used for estimating stature. The issue becomes more significant in the wake of increased frequency of mass disasters which often leave only commingled remains. This letter refers to an interesting article published in your esteemed journal by Nachiket et al.<sup>1</sup> on the reliability of inter-anterior superior iliac spinous distance as compared to foot length for stature estimation in South Indians. We congratulate the authors for their attempt on the estimation of stature from a comparatively rare and new parameter, i.e. inter-anterior superior iliac spinous distance. However, we note that certain technical issues of significance have not been taken into consideration that has great importance in anthropometric studies used in forensic investigations and for the future researchers.

The authors did not define the standard reference landmarks or the ones used in the study for taking the anthropometric measurements. The accuracy of measurements especially the inter-anterior superior iliac spinous distance are often debated and holds importance with regard to reproducibility of the research, scientific verifiability of the study and future investigations. Without this information, the methodology of data collection remains unclear and its relevance limited since in such cases replication of the results would be impossible for other scientists.

Although the authors made mention of instruments used for taking measurements, yet the technical error while taking measurements with the instruments was not calculated. The technical error of a measurement is an accuracy index and represents the measurement quality and control dimension.<sup>2–6</sup> The authors do not make a mention of the inter-observer and intra-observer error in taking measurements. The extent to which the measurement error can influence the measurements should have been taken into consideration.

We seek information from the authors on these aspects regarding their potentially significant work. The present

correspondence is intended to emphasize on some essential issues regarding the accuracy and reliability of measurements in forensic research related to anthropometry.

#### Conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to declare.

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